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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2488

Dec. 14, 1990

THE U.S. ECONOMY continues to grow slowly & the outlook is for more slow growth, or even a brief contraction. Given an orderly unwinding of current problems, though, growth should pick up in 1992, USDA economists say. Longer term forecasts suggest inflation, interest rates & the value of the dollar will drift down. Lower interest rates would put downward pressure on farmers' production costs & a lower exchange rate would aid farm exports. **Contact: Gregory Gajewski (202) 219-0313.**

EUROPEAN FARMERS DEMONSTRATE as a time-honored way of getting their message across. In the past year, farmers have brought out their tractors and livestock to protest the 1990-91 EC price package, the GATT negotiations & low prices in grain & livestock markets. Farming in the EC is done by a large number of small farms. The average size of the nearly 9 million farms there is only 33 acres. Larger, more efficient farms can flourish under the high level of support furnished by the CAP because of lower per-unit costs. However, many small farms still struggle to survive. **Contact: Mary Lisa Madell (202) 219-0610.**

FOOD PROGRAM FOR MOTHERS & CHILDREN EXPANDS -- USDA says it is expanding the caseload allocations for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program by 13 percent in 1991. **Betty Jo Nelsen**, administrator of USDA's Food & Nutrition Service, said USDA is able to expand the program by donating the entire amount of nonfat milk needed for the program. "This means FNS can provide nourishing food packages for thousands of needy people not previously served," she said. **Contact: Phil Shanholtzer (703) 756-3286.**

BEUTER NAMED -- Secretary of Agriculture **Clayton Yeutter** has named **John H. Beuter** to the position of deputy assistant secretary of agriculture for natural resources & environment. Beuter will help manage USDA's Forest Service & Soil Conservation Service. Beuter received his bachelor's & master's degrees from Michigan State University & his Ph.D. from Iowa State University. He has been a principal in the forestry consulting firm of Mason, Bruce & Girard, Inc. **Contact: Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623.**

"TRIGGER" FOR SWAMPBUSTER -- The recently enacted 1990 farm bill significantly changes conditions under which a producer could lose many USDA benefits because of "swampbuster" violation, says **Keith Bjerke**, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service. "Under the new law, alteration of a wetland may trigger swampbuster penalties for current and subsequent crop years," he said. Bjerke said producers should familiarize themselves with the changes in the law. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 447-8206.**

US FOOD MARKETING SYSTEM -- The U.S. food marketing system -- that amorphous network of some 600,000 processing, wholesaling, retailing & foodservice firms that process & distribute the Nation's food supply -- underwent more big changes in structure, behavior & performance in 1989. "The food system's debt rose by nearly \$70 billion from the third quarter of 1988 to the fourth quarter of 1989, largely due to leveraged buyouts and mergers," says USDA Economist **Tony Gallo**. Sales by the system, which is huge, growing & dynamic, totaled \$694 billion in 1989. **Contact:** **Tony Gallo** (202) 219-0866.

AND THE STOCKINGS WERE HUNG -- USDA TV news will be filling those stockings of TV broadcasters with lots of features this holiday season. Some are holiday stories. Others can be aired anytime. There's something for everyone whether you're a farm broadcaster or a consumer reporter. The satellite feeds during the week of Christmas & New Years will be entirely features. We hope this makes the season a little jollier for you!

NEW GERMPLASM ASSURE FOOD FOR FUTURE -- About a hundred times a year, USDA researchers release new plant varieties with traits which improve the odds of tomorrow's crops thriving despite threats by viruses, bacteria, fungi, insects or unfriendly weather & soils. Breeding stronger crop plants is "key to feeding the world's population," says **Henry L. Shands** of USDA Agricultural Research Service. Today's scientists are striving to customize crops to withstand diseases, pests & environmental stresses such as drought, while preserving traits for high yield. **Contact:** **Henry L. Shands** (301) 344-3311.

DID YOU NOTICE A CHANGE in the satellite times & transponders for USDA TV news? Just in case it slipped by you, look for us now on **Wester IV, Transponder 12D, Channel 23**, Thursday at 7:30 to 7:45 p.m., EST; Saturday at 10 to 10:45 a.m., EST, & Monday, at 8 to 8:45 a.m., EST.

USDA SUBSTITUTING CHEESE FOR PEANUT BUTTER -- Because peanuts are increasing in cost & cheese decreasing, USDA will substitute cheese for peanut butter on a limited basis in its food assistance programs. **Betty Jo Nelsen**, administrator of USDA Food & Nutrition Service, said changes in market conditions have led to falling prices for cheese. "This is a decision which makes economic sense," Nelsen said. **Contact:** **Phil Shanholtzer** (703) 756-3286.

NATIONAL FOREST RECEIPTS -- Forty-one states & Puerto Rico will receive more than \$346 million as their part of the national forest receipts collected in 1990, F. **Dale Robertson**, chief of USDA's Forest Service says. Receipts during 1990 collected from the sale & use of national forest resources totaled \$1.38 billion. **Contact:** **Ann Matejko** (202) 475-3787.

CHECK YOUR LABEL -- In our continuing efforts to make certain the Farm Broadcasters Letter is getting to the right person, we ask that you periodically check your mailing label. If there are any errors, please let us know.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

- AGRICULTURE USA #1750** -- The multi-lateral trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs & Trade are suspended. On this edition of Agriculture USA, Brenda Curtis explores the implications of the suspension on the future of agricultural trade. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)
- CONSUMER TIME #1230** -- A Caribbean Christmas; post-holiday dieting; hamburgers in dieting; hamburgers in Moscow; the healthy appeal of flax; irradiating foods. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)
- AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1738** -- USDA News Highlights; suspension of the GATT talks; panel says growth hormone safe; problems at REA; "swampbuster changes. (Weekly reel of news features.)
- NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1350** -- Vitamin K & the newborn; cattle yield clues to dwarfism; body composition & puberty; carbon dioxide & global warming; global warming & the next ice age. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)
- UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Wed., Dec. 19, ag outlook, catfish, cattle on feed; Thurs., Dec. 20, U.S. trade update; Fri., Dec. 21, livestock update, poultry production, world coffee situation; Mon., Dec. 24, Santa Claus weather; Thurs., Dec. 27, world tobacco situation; Mon., Dec. 31, ag prices.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EST, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE (Week of Dec. 13, 15 & 17)

- FEATURES --** DeBoria Janifer reports on Christmas tree selection & care; Pat O'Leary reports on the 1991 food price outlook & Lynn Wyvill reports on U.S.-USSR global climate change research.
- ACTUALITIES --** Highlights from the GATT trade talks in Brussels, Belgium (footage courtesy of Al Pell of Ag Day); USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen on the winter weather outlook; USDA World Board Chairman Jim Donald on cotton, soybean, corn & wheat use & price outlooks; and USDA Analyst Mike Dwyer sums up the 1990 export year & takes a look at 1991.
- NEXT WEEK --** Deboria Janifer reports on holiday plants; Pat O'Leary reports on wholesale marketing here & around the world; Lynn Wyvill reports on the dietary guidelines; Will Pemble reports on a new haymaker; Kathleen Katras reports on U.S. wine exports & much, much more over the next few weeks.

Available on Satellite Westar IV, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EST
SATURDAY 10:00 - 10:45 a.m., EST
MONDAY 8:00 - 8:45 a.m., EST

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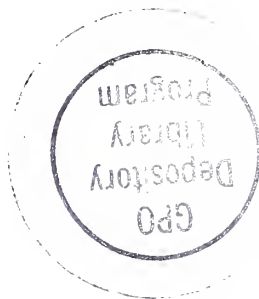
LIVE REPORTS...from Brussels during the GATT negotiations by **Steve Wentworth**, chairman of the board of the National Corn Growers Association, were broadcast during the noon program of **Bill Austin** (WSOY, Decatur, Ill.). Bill says the audio quality was better than local calls he has received. Good weather this Fall helped the harvest, but some corn yields were lower than expected, down 10 to 15 bushels at 160, while soybeans held well at 50 to 55 bushels per acre. A wet spring caused field ponding, which was a factor in lower yields.

CONCERN...is being expressed by producers in the area served by **Marla Behrends** (WKAN, Kankakee, Ill.) regarding a possible cutback of Cooperative Extension services. She says a boost in funds by the state legislature will be needed to prevent consolidation of offices. Marla attended the Corn Growers Association meeting in St. Louis, and noticed attendance was down from last year. Year-end period at the station is being used to create budgets & goals for 1991.

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Office of Public Affairs
Radio-TV Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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GRAIN PRODUCERS...in the Northwest are very concerned, says **Taylor Brown** (Northern Ag Network, Billings, Mont.). Producers say prices aren't worth talking about, the area's weather is forecast to remain dry, and flexibility provisions in the Farm Bill won't help because the region's weather and soil limits options. Cattle producers are having a good year though; they like those prices.

BROADCAST PIONEER...**Dana Reynolds**, 82, died in Arlington, Va. He was a farm broadcaster during the early 40s for ABC and NBC, and produced one of the first broadcasts of the "Armed Forces Hour" for NBC-TV before returning to USDA.

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Layne Beaty** (USDA Radio-TV chief, retired) for receiving the Broadcasting Pioneer Award from the Washington Chapter of Pioneers. The award honors broadcast pioneers who have earned a degree of distinction in their field.


VIC POWELL

Chief, Radio & TV Division